

# 41



## COLE CUSTER

### Tackling Talladega

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina (Sept. 29, 2020) – This weekend Cole Custer and the No. 41 HaasTooling.com team for Stewart-Haas Racing (SHR) head to Talladega, Alabama for the final superspeedway race of the season. Custer will make his 34<sup>th</sup> career NASCAR Cup Series start at the 500 mile event.

The rookie driver's one previous NASCAR Cup Series start at Talladega Superspeedway was in June. Custer ran in the top-five during the event, but as the race returned went to overtime, he had to dive onto pit road from the fifth position after his Mustang began to starve for fuel. The late-race stop relegated Custer to a 22<sup>nd</sup>-place finish.

In this year's two visits to Talladega's sister track, Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway, Custer's races both ended prematurely – in February due to a mechanical issue and last month after getting caught up in a late-race accident.

In the NASCAR Xfinity Series at Talladega, Custer has three starts between 2017 and 2019. He earned a best finish of ninth in 2018 and has an average starting position of 12.3 and an average finishing position of 22.3. In the NASCAR Gander RV & Outdoors Truck Series, Custer has one start in 2016, which he started on the pole, led two laps and finished 29<sup>th</sup> after getting caught up in an accident.

While Custer did not advance to the Round of 12 of the Cup Series playoffs, he's still eligible to finish as high as fifth in the final standings and can't finish below 16<sup>th</sup>.

Last weekend at Las Vegas, the California native was having a solid day, even with a tight handling Mustang. An untimely late-race caution during a green-flag pit cycle forced Custer to take the wave-around in order to get back on the lead lap. Custer worked his way up to a 16th-place finish in his third Cup Series start at the intermediate oval.

So far this season, Ford has won 17 races, and Custer and his SHR teammate Kevin Harvick have both earned wins for the Blue Oval – one for Custer and nine for Harvick. Ford's milestone 700<sup>th</sup> win in the Cup Series came at the hands of Harvick on Aug. 23 at Dover (Del.) International Speedway. Ford captured its first victory on June 25, 1950. Ford drivers made up 50 percent of this year's starting playoff field, with eight drivers representing the Michigan manufacturer in the Round of 16, and five drivers continuing on to the Round of 12.

With Custer's Cup Series win July 12 at Kentucky Speedway in Sparta, he became one of 10 drivers who have won in each of NASCAR's top three national series, as well as in ARCA and one of NASCAR's developmental series.

Team co-owner Gene Haas' newest holding, [Haas Tooling](https://www.haastooling.com), was launched as a way for CNC machinists to purchase high quality cutting tools at great prices. Haas' cutting tools are sold exclusively online at HaasTooling.com and shipped directly to end users. Beginning July 1, HaasTooling.com products became available nationally. The cutting tools available for purchase at HaasTooling.com are even more important during the current COVID-19 pandemic as CNC machines have become vital to producing personal protective equipment.

SHR has 74 starts at Talladega and one win, earned by Aric Almirola in October 2018. SHR dominated that day and had all four of its cars nose to tail leading the field in the closing laps. In total, SHR has two pole awards, eight top-fives and 23 top-10s along with 382 laps led at the 2.66-mile, high-banked superspeedway.

Haas Automation, founded by Haas in 1983, is America's leading builder of CNC machine tools. The company manufactures a complete line of vertical and horizontal machining centers, turning centers and rotary tables and indexers. All Haas products are constructed in the company's 1.1-million-square-foot manufacturing facility in Oxnard, California, and distributed through a worldwide network of Haas Factory Outlets.

Custer, who had a trio of starts in the Cup Series in 2018, clinched 2020 Rookie of the Year honors in his official rookie season in NASCAR's most prestigious series. Competing against fellow rookie notables Christopher Bell and Tyler Reddick, he was the only rookie to clinch a playoff spot this season. Custer was the highest finishing rookie at Las Vegas last weekend.

***Cole Custer, Driver of the No. 41 HaasTooling.com Mustang for Stewart-Haas Racing:***

**Some of the remaining tracks will have fans in the stands. How does it feel to have them there?**

“Honestly, at first, it’s a little weird at times because we got so used to them not being there. We’d show up to the racetrack and it would just be silent. It has been cool to have them back to get us pumped up before the race. We do this for the fans and to not have them there is really strange. Hopefully, we can get them back at all of the tracks soon.”

**How would you describe racing at Talladega with the added pressure of it being in the playoffs?**

“It’s definitely a stressful race, but I guess all of the races in the playoffs are stressful. You can’t control a lot and you have to hope for the best. Everyone is racing for stage points, whether you’re in the Round of 12 or not. You have to race your race the best you can to put yourself in a good position.”

**Your teammate Kevin Harvick and Denny Hamlin have been in a league of their own this year. Is there a way you can get to that level?**

“For us, it’s about taking it one day at a time and being competitive and run our race. You can’t focus a lot, especially being a rookie, on what other people are doing. I think you have to focus on yourself. You can’t be worrying about the other guys. You can learn some things from them and make sure you’re not out of the ballpark, but you have to make sure you’re running your races. If you start trying to do too much, you’ll start making mistakes.”

-TSC-

Contact Lauren Emling with True Speed Communication  
(704) 875-3388, ext. 811 or [Lauren.Emling@TrueSpeedCommunication.com](mailto:Lauren.Emling@TrueSpeedCommunication.com)  
[www.TrueSpeedCommunication.com](http://www.TrueSpeedCommunication.com) • Online Media Kit Available at: [www.TrueSpeedMedia.com](http://www.TrueSpeedMedia.com)